

# The Washington Times

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## Letters to the Editor

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### **'Not a way to vet science'**

Your editorial ("Barton's reasonable request," Thursday) makes the questioning by Rep. Joe L. Barton, Texas Republican, of climate researchers and their sponsors sound reasonable by leaving out most of the facts about the Barton request.

All members of Congress have a responsibility, as your editorial put it, "for making absolutely sure that the science used to justify legislation is thoroughly vetted." The problem is that Mr. Barton's House Energy and Commerce Committee investigation does not appear to be designed to vet the science, but rather to harass the scientists even though their science has been carried out according to scientific norms.

The Energy and Commerce Committee could have asked for a briefing from the scientists and their antagonists to vet the science, or asked the National Academy of Sciences or another scientific group to evaluate the complicated science and statistics that generated the "hockey stick," the 20th century's temperature spike. Or the committee could have convened a hearing to learn about the science.

Instead, the committee has initiated an investigation -- not standard procedure -- that seeks a wide range of documents that are not related in the least to understanding the debate over the "hockey stick" graph. It is not reasonable or innocent for a committee to begin a broad, open-ended, one-sided investigation. That's not a way to vet science. Indeed, it is unprecedented for Congress to intervene in an ongoing scientific debate in this manner because such intervention threatens open scientific inquiry.

We would welcome an open, balanced and targeted congressional effort to learn more about the debate surrounding the "hockey stick." The Energy and Commerce Committee inquest is nothing of the sort.

REP. SHERWOOD BOEHLERT  
Chairman  
House Committee on Science  
Washington